



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: Mary Creighton – Director, Recreation Services
Chris Ricketts – Director, Economic Growth, Development, Culture and Entrepreneurship

Date: July 17, 2023

Re: Little Native Hockey League Bid to Host – 2024 Tournament, Cultural Festival and Gala Celebration

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled Little Native Hockey League Bid to Host – 2024 Tournament, Cultural Festival and Gala Celebration be received; and
- 2) That Council approve the City's In-Kind contribution currently estimated at \$360,000 as outlined in the report, to be managed within existing City budgets; and
- 3) That Council authorize staff on behalf of the Corporation to submit a Bid to host the 2024 Little Native Hockey League Tournament, Cultural Festival and Gala Celebration ;
- 4) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an overview of the bid submission to host the 2024 Little Native Hockey League (LNHL) Tournament, Cultural Festival and Gala Celebration, including the financial details and for approval to submit a bid to Deloitte Canada no later than Thursday July 20 at 2:00 pm. EST.

BACKGROUND:

Deloitte Canada has been retained by the LNHL to seek bid proposals for the 2024 Tournament, Cultural Festival and Gala Celebration. An RFP was released on Friday June 9, 2023 for the Little NHL Indigenous hockey tournament seeking a host for the March 2024 event; their 50th anniversary year.

The City of Mississauga has been hosting the Little Native Hockey League Tournament since 2013. Following a three year pause due to COVID the tournament returned to Mississauga in 2023 for the final year of a long term agreement.

OPTION/DISCUSSION

The LNHL is an annual hockey tournament and cultural festival for First Nation youth players occurring over March break each year. The tournament welcomes approximately 3,500 youth male and female players from Ontario along with families, friends and spectators. In addition to the 2024 hockey Tournament and Cultural Festival, a Gala Celebration will be hosted to celebrate the 50th anniversary and honour and recognize the inductees in the LNHL Hall of Fame.

For the 50th anniversary tournament, the LNHL is looking to acknowledge and recognize the strong connection to water and water sources for the First Nations of Ontario.

LNHL History

Anti-Indigenous racism against First Nation players resulted in exclusion and demoralization. To give First Nation children and youth an opportunity to play in a hockey tournament, five men decided to plan a tournament in 1971 in Little Current, Manitoulin Island. Over 50 years later, the LNHL has grown to approximately 200 teams with 3,500 Ontario First Nation children and youth participating. Championship day is on the final day of the tournament and every participant is a champion and receives a medal. LNHL Alumni have played at all levels of hockey including “AA”, “AAA”, Tier II, Junior, College/University, Ontario Hockey league and the National Hockey League

LNHL Vision

The stated Vision of the LNHL is “to allow our Ontario First Nation children an opportunity to play hockey and represent our Ontario First Nation communities”.

LNHL Mission

The stated Mission of the LNHL is “to lead, develop, and promote a fun positive hockey experience and to provide our First Nation Youth with an opportunity to be educated about the values of fair play and sportsmanship, both on and off the ice including the value of respect for all citizens attending the Little NHL”.

Markham’s Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

The City through many different actions has demonstrated that we take Canada’s commitment to Truth and Reconciliation seriously and as such has ensured that it is a critical component in the City’s overall diversity strategy and action plan.

We have shown through our 2017 Agreement of Cultural Collaboration with Eabametoong First Nation , that we are committed as a municipality to the Truth and Reconciliation journey. This first-of-its-kind agreement between an urban municipality and a remote northern First Nation community enables us to partner together and learn from one another.

Although the LNHL is a sport based tournament, it is essential that the host community ensure that celebration of the First Nation's culture is included and respected in every aspect of the plan.

Reponse to the RFP

Staff from Recreation and Economic Growth, Development, Culture and Entrepreneurship have been working with Destination Markham(DM) staff to evaluate the City's ability to meet the RFP criteria. Both parties, City and DM are very confident that Markham has the capacity and experience required to host the LNHL Tournament, Cultural Festival, Opening Ceremony and Gala Celebration.

The following outlines the timelines to address the RFP

EVENT	DATE	STATUS
RFP Open	June 9	Received
Deadline to submit Indication of Intent	June 23	Submitted
Deadline for submission of questions	June 30	Submitted
Deadline for response to questions and addenda	July 7	Received
Deadline for proposal submission	July 20	In progress
Evaluation Period	July 24 - 27	
Site Visits (if required)	July 26 - 27	

City Staff and Destination Markham met to discuss the bid and recommended to Council at the meeting on Wednesday June 21, 2023 that Markham submit a letter of intent by June 23, 2023. The letter of intent provides Markham the opportunity to ask clarifying questions but does not commit the City to a bid submission.

Staff submitted the Letter of Intent followed by questions related to the RFP. The response to the questions were received on Monday July 10, 2023.

Staff have been working over the past 3 weeks to develop the Bid package and financial commitments to ensure we are able to address all items identified in the RFP

Evaluation Criteria

As per the RFP, proposals will be evaluated based on a Host City's ability to showcase the event's spiritual water theme and, meet the operational and financial requirements of the tournament.

Proposals will be evaluated in a two-stage process:

Stage 1: Non-Financial Submissions. LNHL will evaluate each proposal on the following criteria:

- City Overview
- Hockey Operations
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Cultural Events
- Gala Celebration
- Accommodation
- Sponsorship and Sales
- Marketing and Media
- Safety
- Value-add

Stage2: Financial Submissions. LNHL will evaluate the financial commitments both Direct support and In-kind support.

- The RFP identifies that respondents should include a financial proposal that includes a minimum of \$750,000 in financial support through direct and in-kind sources.

Bid Package Highlights

The following are high level comments related to a number of the evaluation criteria:

1. Hockey Operations

Markham would provide ice time and officials at no cost to the organization as a minimum. The anticipated number of ice pads required is 14. The City of Markham has 10 available ice pads. Staff have met with Recreation staff from Stouffville and have secured a commitment for 4 additional ice pads.

2. Accommodation

Destination Markham staff have been working with hotel properties in Markham to secure commitment for rooms to support the LNHL tournament. It is estimated that 1,800 to 2,000 rooms are required for at least 4 nights of the tournament. DM staff recognize that not all

accommodation requirements will be met through Markham properties so they have also reached out to hotels in Richmond Hill and Stouffville.

3. Gala Celebration

The Gala Celebration will take place on Saturday March 9th. This 50th Anniversary Celebration is a significant event for the LNHL with 1,000 people expected to attend. DM staff have secured the ballroom space at the Hilton Toronto/Markham Suites Conference Centre. City staff have had noteworthy experience hosting events at this site, and will assist the LNHL in the production of their event.

4. Opening Ceremonies

A re-imagined outdoor Opening Ceremonies is proposed in place of a traditional arena event as requested in the RFP. The RFP identifies the need to have a 5,000 seat arena to support the Opening Ceremonies which would take place on Sunday March 10, 2024. An arena of this size is not available within a reasonable distance, so staff will present a “re-imagined” event to include an outdoor festival site to engage all age groups in celebrating the opening of the 2023 event. Staff have had significant experience in hosting outdoor winter events including Hometown Hockey, Olympic Torch Relay, and the Markham Snow and Ice Festival. We are confident that we can submit a dynamic proposal that will be attractive to the evaluation committee however we understand this does not meet their requirement for a 5,000 seat arena. .

Partnership with Destination Markham

The ability to host the LNHL Tournament, Cultural Festival, Opening Ceremonies and Gala event would be in partnership with Destination Markham. Within the RFP document it is identified that the anticipated Economic Impact to the community has been estimated to be a minimum of \$10 million.

On Friday July 7, 2023 a Special Destination Markham Committee meeting was held to review the proposal and discuss DM financial commitment to support the bid. Staff discussed the merits of hosting such an event identifying the following:

Benefits to Host Community

- 5,000 visitors bring \$10 million in economic impact to the host community (identified in the RFP) includes:
 - expenditures in hotels – 6,000 room nights over 5 days
 - Average room night \$200/night x 6,000 = \$1,200,000
 - (The majority of the rooms will be in Markham.)
 - transportation
 - restaurants
 - retail

- groceries
- large household buys

The significant difference in this event is that many families travel from very long distances and take the opportunity to make significant purchases that are easily obtained in Markham.

If successful in our bid, we will work very closely with these tourism sectors and communicate the expected economic impact. Destination Markham staff will play a significant role in working with these sectors.

The Destination Markham Committee was very supportive of this bid, noting that it was aligned with their strategic mandate. As a result the following is an excerpt of the DM Board Resolution unanimously approved:

WHEREAS, DMC acknowledges the importance of supporting this event and the positive impact it will have on the community;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of DMC hereby agrees to provide direct financial support in the amount of up to \$500,000 from the current DMC reserve fund and a direct in-kind support of \$50,000 (this can be adjusted based on the staff involvement) if the City of Markham and DMC are successful in winning the bid to host the Little Native Hockey League Tournament.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As discussed within the RFP, the bid should include a financial proposal that includes a minimum of \$750,000 in support through direct and in-kind sources.

The following is a draft budget that staff have developed to support the bid. Financial Commitment is as follows:

In Kind	\$410,000
Direct Costs	\$495,000

TOTAL Commitment	\$905,000

The commitment from Destination Markham is to support the Direct Costs up to \$500,000 and the In-Kind cost of \$50,000 (based on DM staff involvement). The City's portion would be to support the \$360,000 of In-Kind costs.

Support from Destination Markham and City of Markham

In-Kind \$410,000

• 550 hours over 14 ice pads (4 pads from Stouffville)	\$150,000
• Community Room space	\$ 10,000
• Staffing resources (6 month secondment)	\$ 50,000
• Host Committee Staff Support (Markham/DM)	\$150,000
• Opening Ceremony support	\$ 25,000
• Rec/Cult/Lib Programming	\$ 15,000
• Permit Waivers where required	\$ 10,000

Direct Support \$495,000

• Opening Festival Producer/Coordinator	\$ 50,000
• Special Indigenous Advisor	\$ 15,000
• Commemorative Player Souvenir	\$ 32,000
• Opening Festival Production/staging/entertainment	\$160,000
• Sunrise Ceremony and Breakfast for Executive & Elders	\$ 3,000
• City Wide Cultural Programming	\$ 40,000
• 50 th Anniversary Gala Support	\$ 25,000
• Medical and Security	\$ 25,000
• Referees	\$ 25,000
• Volunteer Recognition	\$ 15,000
• Volunteer Shuttle & Transportation support	\$ 10,000
• LNHL/Elder Daily Catering	\$ 10,000
• LNHL Planning Meetings/Travel/Accommodations	\$ 15,000
• Signage/Marketing/Welcome Banners	\$ 50,000
• Event Cancellation Insurance	\$ 5,000
• Economic Assessment	\$ 15,000

Should the City win the bid, the City portion (in-kind) estimated at \$360,000 would be managed through existing City budgets. Efforts would be made to mitigate cost impacts, for example through sponsorship opportunities where possible and appropriate. Costs would be monitored and reported as part of the year-end result of operations.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Although the LNHL is a sport based tournament, it is essential that the host community ensure that celebration of the First Nation's culture is included and respected in every aspect of the plan which aligns to our Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Recreation Services, Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship and Finance

RECOMMENDED BY:



Mary Creighton, Director Recreation



Chris Rickett, Director Economic
Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship